

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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621 ments, health program, and construction for public works all depended on generous amounts of labor. Without such cheap incentives to mobilize this labor, these projects could not have been pursued so effectively.

As obvious as these advantages of "indirect rule" may be, it should be as clear that it is a poor vehicle for introducing social change. The more it is used to wield authority, the stronger and more resistant to change it can become; the more it is undermined by altering local relationships that sustain it, the less remains of its usefulness. Hence, from adoption of this scheme initially as an expedient to "pacify" the island, Japanese authorities acquired a positive interest in preserving the same set of agrarian institutions that had existed in Taiwan before their arrival.

Thus they abandoned the idea of reorganizing the rural society—primarily because they tried and failed, but also because as it stood it gave them the best access to regulation of the agricultural population and farming practices. It was in some respects a ready-made instrument for exerting the necessary control with the least disturbance of customary affairs, having in the past enabled the various parties to the export trade to prosper at the expense of farmers. For better coordination of their policies, Japanese gradually did erect a more formal type of government administration, but the basis of the system in rural areas was not greatly affected by this modification.

The Impact of Improvements in Agriculture

185 The Japanese who were charged with remodeling Taiwan's economy gave first priority to long-range investments around the fringes of agriculture. The rural economy was already geared to exchange food and related products for special capital services. Certain of these services were soon altered under Japanese influence. Positions that provided them, or that could usurp them, gradually began to be occupied by Japanese nationals—official, private, and always an indistinct class in-between that wielded quasi-official sanctions.

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242 Those innovations that worked their way into agriculture were directed chiefly to raising crop yields per unit of tilled land. Another avenue of increasing the total agricultural product was by extending

construed as a lament that there were few opportunities for advancement outside the rural villages and towns dominated by petty gentry. Discontent from this source bore few signs of being the awakening of a popular movement for independence among the Taiwanese, as it is sometimes represented. See Hsu Tz'e-wei (1946), p. 161 ff.

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the land area that yielded crops. From 34.2 per cent of all "level" land (under 500 meters elevation) in 1910, this area cultivated was raised to 43.7 per cent by 1940. The *effective* crop area was extended still further by irrigation, terracing and careful crop rotation. Irrigation converted many dry fields into paddy fields, as we found in the previous chapter. Improvement in irrigation made more of the paddy fields yield two or more crops each year (see Table 9). Evidently

TABLE 9

SPREAD OF DOUBLE-CROPPING IN IRRIGATED FIELDS, 1917 TO 1945
Area of Paddy Fields That Was Double-Cropped in Taiwan
(Thousands of Hectares)
Yearly Average in Each Period

Years	Total Cultivated Area	Area in Paddy Fields	Area of Double-Cropped Paddy Fields	Per Cent Double-Cropped:	
				of Total Cultivated Area	of Total Paddy Area
1917-1919	730	336	217 ¹	29.7	64.5
1920-1924	753	366	252	33.4	68.7
1925-1929	795	386	274	34.4	71.0
1930-1934	816	422	300	36.8	71.2
1935-1939	850	516	320	37.6	61.9
1940-1944	844	520	314	37.2	60.4

Sources: *Statistical Summary*, Table 196.

Ch'en Cheng-hsiang, *Land Utilization in Taiwan*, Appendix, Table 2.

much of the advance in crop production took the form of increasing the number of harvests from land already cultivated, which in Taiwan was already the "highest in the [Japanese] Empire."¹⁴

Land was not the only element of agriculture that was put to harder use. With a few exceptions,¹⁵ cultivation continued to be carried on with little difference in ways of applying human labor to the land. Agricultural implements were improved, but remained similar in design; irrigation facilities opened new land, but their construction was itself labor-intensive; transplanting of rice became generally practised to save land, but it is inherently a very laborious process. One of the major problems of farmers in the Far East has long been that their work is distributed unevenly throughout the

¹⁴ Nasu, Shiroshi (1941), p. 96.

¹⁵ A few large-scale plantations experimented with the use of tractors in raising sugar cane.